



proud past, promising future

N E W S

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS PLAY ROLE IN PROTECTING DRINKING WATER, ENVIRONMENT

We get a lot of rain in the Pacific Northwest. When that stormwater flows off roofs, yards, streets and parking lots, it picks up dirt, pet waste, litter, motor oil and a host of other pollutants. If not properly managed, those pollutants can be dumped into our streams, lakes, rivers, wetlands and groundwater.

We can manage this runoff by channeling it through specially built landscaped and structural features to remove pollutants and slow its flow into our waterways. This reduces the risk of flooding and protects the environment and our drinking water.

Many stormwater treatment facilities are privately owned and maintained by homeowner associations. One type of facility commonly found in HOAs is the biofiltration swale, or bio swale for short.

Bio swales often look like flat-bottomed channels with grass other dense plants growing in them. A bio swale is usually dry, but runoff moves through it slowly and at a shallow depth after a storm. Sediment, oily materials and other pollutants are removed by the combined effects of filtration, infiltration and settling as stormwater passes through the plants. Standing water should drain fairly quickly.

The bio swales often include sediment traps that allow sediment and debris to settle out of the stormwater runoff, and field inlets that collect stormwater and route it through underground pipes. Grates in the inlets trap sediment and debris.

The best way to ensure your facilities are working properly and limit big repairs is to follow a regular inspection and **maintenance schedule**. Much of the maintenance of small, simple facilities like bio swales can be done by neighbors or landscaping firms. Specific maintenance objectives are listed in the Clark County Stormwater Manual. Visit www.clark.wa.gov/stormwater and look for the link to "Clark County Stormwater Manual 2015 - Book 4."

The Stormwater Partners of SW Washington website gives an overview of types of facilities you or your association must maintain, checklists that show how to maintain them and fix problems, how to recognize facilities in your development, who to contact with questions and other resources. Visit it at <http://www.stormwaterpartners.com>.

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